

School-Based Health Centers and Academic Success

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Poor academic outcomes and high dropout rates are major concerns of educators, policy makers, and parents alike – and poor health severely limits a child’s motivation and ability to learn. Recent research confirms that **health disparities affect educational achievement** (1). Improving students’ health is integral to education reform.

Why School-Based Health Centers?

School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs)—the convergence of public health, primary care, and mental health—provide an optimal setting to **foster learning readiness and academic achievement** while giving children the resources they need to improve their health.

The Facts:

- High school SBHC users in one 2000 study had a **50% decrease in absenteeism** and **25% decrease in tardiness** two months after receiving school-based mental health and counseling (2).
- A study of SBHC users in Seattle found that those who use the clinic for medical purposes had a **significant increase in attendance** and **decrease in drop-out** over nonusers (3, 4).
- A 2007 study found that SBHC users for mental health purposes **increased their Grade Point Averages** over time compared to nonusers (3).
- African-American male SBHC users were **three times more likely to stay in school** than their peers who did not use the SBHC (5).
- Students, teachers, and parents who have a SBHC **rated academic expectations, school engagement, and safety and respect significantly higher** than in schools without a SBHC (6).
- SBHCs in The Bronx, NY **reduced hospitalization** and increased school attendance among **school children with asthma** (7).
- A quasi-experimental study in New York observed that students not enrolled in a SBHC lost three times as much seat time as students enrolled in a SBHC (8).